

al
a viscoelastic hand surface secured about the outer surface of the tubular shell, wherein
the viscoelastic hand surface is a viscous liquid material contained within an elastomeric bag;
and wherein the tubular shell includes a first end and a second end, and the tubular shell
includes an outwardly extending first lip adjacent the first end of the tubular shell and a
outwardly extending second lip adjacent the second end of the tubular shell, the first and
second lips acting to retain the viscoelastic hand surface in position on the tubular shell.

Cancel claims 2, 4, 5, 12, and 15-20 without prejudice.

REMARKS

**Reconsideration And Allowance
Are Respectfully Requested.**

Claims 1, 3, 6-11, 13 and 14 are currently pending. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 2 and 12 have been cancelled and their limitations have been added to independent claim 1. Claims 4, 5 and 15-20 have been cancel based upon the previous election and in attempt to place the application in condition for allowance. No new claims have been added. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant would first like to thank Examiner Blau for the courtesies extended during the Examiner's Interview conducted on March 13, 2000. During the course of this interview, Examiner Blau discussed the pending claims with Applicant's representative, Howard N. Flaxman. Specifically, claim 1 was discussed as it relates to the disclosures of U.S. Patent Nos. 5,322,290 to Minami ("Minami"), 5,555,584 to Moore, III et al. ("Moore") and 5,571,050 to Huang ("Huang"). During the course of the Examiner's Interview, the importance of the lips in combination with the liquid viscoelastic material were discussed. It was also discussed how the prior art of record is different from the claimed grip structure.

With regard to the rejections based upon prior art, claims 1, 8-10 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Minami. Claims 2, 3 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Minami in view of Huang. Finally, claims 1, 6, 7, 9 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moore in view of Minami. These rejections are respectfully traversed in view of the amended claims and the remarks which follow.

Based upon the discussion during the Examiner's Interview, Applicant has substantially amended claim 1. As amended, claim 1 now defines a grip adapted for attachment for an implement including a handle. The grip includes a longitudinally extending tubular shell having an inner surface shaped and dimensioned for attachment to the handle of the implement. The shell further includes an outer surface. The grip also includes a viscoelastic hand surface secured about the outer surface of the tubular shell, wherein the

viscoelastic hand surface is a viscous liquid material contained within an elastomeric bag. The tubular shell further includes a first end and a second end, wherein an outwardly extending first lip is positioned adjacent the first end of the tubular shell and an outwardly extending second lip is positioned the second end of the tubular shell. The first and second lips act to retain the viscoelastic hand surface in position on the tubular shell.

In contrast to the claimed invention, Minami discloses a golf club grip having inner and outer layers formed of differing materials. Minami, however, fails to disclose a grip having a viscoelastic hand surface formed from a "viscous liquid material contained within an elastomeric bag." In addition, Minami fails to disclose first and second lips respectively positioned at the first and second ends of the tubular shell.

While Moore discloses a tennis racket grip constructed from a gel material 76 positioned within a flexible envelope, Moore fails to disclose a grip including a central tubular shell supporting the gel pad, as well as lips secured at opposite ends for controlling the positioning of the gel pad along the handle surface of the tennis racket. As such, nothing supports the grip disclosed by Moore as it is secured to the handle of the disclosed tennis racket. This provides a less than stable grip arrangement, which is ultimately difficult to apply and use.

Similarly, Huang discloses a golf grip having lips at the upper and lower ends thereof. However, and with reference to the molding process disclosed in the specification of Huang, the lips are merely utilized in facilitating the fabrication of the golf grip. Specifically, the

outer surface of the golf grip is not a gel material as claimed, but a polyurethane molded to the rubber-like sleeve and permitted to cure. As such, the lips on the golf grip disclosed by Huang perform a substantially different purpose from those lips provided on the claimed golf grip.

With the forgoing in mind, the obviousness of combining Moore and Huang to meet the claimed limitations could only be based upon impermissible hindsight. As such, it is Applicant's opinion that amended claim 1 overcomes the prior art of record and Applicant respectfully requests that the prior rejections be withdrawn.

Specifically, the lips disclosed by Huang are neither disclosed nor suggested as being used to orient a gel hand surface thereon. Similarly, neither Moore nor Minami provide suggestions for any modifications to meet the amended claims. It is, therefore, Applicant's opinion that nothing in the cited prior art either discloses or suggest the claimed grip. Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the outstanding rejections be withdrawn.

With regard to the claims dependent upon independent claim 1, these claims are believed to overcome the cited prior art for the reasons presented above.

For the foregoing reasons, it is Applicant's opinion that claims 1, 3, 6-11, 13 and 14 overcome the prior art of record. As such, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections be withdrawn and the application pass to allowance.

It is believed that this case is in condition for allowance and reconsideration thereof and early issuance is respectfully requested. If it is felt that an interview would expedite prosecution of this application, please do not hesitate to contact applicants' representative at the below number.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H N Flaxman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Howard N. Flaxman
Registration No. 34,595

AQUILINO & WELSH, P.C.
2341 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Ste. 112
Arlington, Virginia 22202
Telephone: (703) 920-1122

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